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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Factors Affecting Railroad Operations
in the USSR

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1.

The 1946-1950 Five-Year Plan for the Restoration and Development of the National Economy contained a proposal for the construction of a railroad between Astrakhan and Gurev. However, by 1951 this construction had not yet started and the prospecting work had only partially begun. In Astrakhan they were beginning to reconstruct the city rail terminal. This reconstruction included the building of a railroad bridge from the left bank of the Volga (in the Elling region between petroleum storage point #8 / Neftebaid N 8/ and the Karl Marx ship repair dock) to the right bank (between petroleum storage point #5 / Neftebaid N 5/ and the Lenin ship repair dock). At the same time, the Astrakhan-Kuzmyar railroad line was being repaired. These two projects were scheduled for completion in 1952, but the completion dates were changed twice. At first, work was to be finished in January 1951, then the date was changed to January 1952. However, by June 1951, plan fulfillment was extremely unsatisfactory and later learned that construction of the bridge and repair of the terminal would not be completed until 1953. The unsatisfactory progress of the work can be explained by poor organization and by the extensive use of prisoner labor.

2.

3.

on 50 thousand kilometers of railroad lines, the existing rails weighing 36.5 kilograms per linear meter were to be replaced by rails weighing 45-50 kilograms per linear meter. This will permit an increase in the speed of rail traffic and loads carried. In addition, the replacement of sand road ballast by crushed rock was being planned.

4.

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[REDACTED] railway tank cars loaded with petroleum products
were shipped by boat across the Caspian Sea.

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5. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The following should be included among shortcomings in the functioning of railroads in the USSR:

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- (a) Unsatisfactory organization in the planning of rail shipments. Plans for enterprises arrive the first days of the plan month, (2nd-5th), and later on (10th-12th), with the result that during the first days of the month shipments reach the railroad in insignificant quantities, while during the middle and end of the month, the transport load sharply exceeds planned norms.
- (b) The organization of passenger transport is entirely unsatisfactory. The quantity of passenger trains is quite inadequate, resulting in an enormous pile up of people at the stations. It is characteristic that I personally observed this phenomenon constantly for 20 years. There never was a period in the USSR when a passenger could easily obtain a ticket on the train he wanted going to the destination he wanted. All the efforts of railroad lines were brought to bear on the transport of goods rather than on service to the population.
- (c) Lack of coordination between the work of the Ministry of Railroads and that of other ministries, such as the Ministry of Merchant Marine and the Ministry of River Transport. There are frequent instances of ships arriving at the pier with no rail cars provided to unload them; and conversely, where the rail cars arrive only to find that the ships have not yet arrived. This results in extended lay-overs of ships and rail cars.

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